In the Claims:

Please amend the claims as indicated below. This listing of claims replaces all prior versions.

1-2. (canceled)

3. (currently amended) [[A]]For a semiconductor device that includes a semiconductor die having a circuit side and bulk silicon in a back side opposite the circuit side, a method~~, according to claim 2, wherein~~ for detecting a defect at a surface in the die, comprising:

locating a first beam splitter for optical manipulation relative to the back side of the semiconductor die;

directing light of a known wavelength at the beam splitter, wherein the first beam splitter is adapted to direct a first beam of light into the back side of the semiconductor die which reflects a [[the]] second beam of light back to the first beam splitter~~, and wherein the~~;

redirecting the second beam to a second beam splitter, the second beam splitter generating third and fourth beams of light;

analyzing the third and fourth beams of light, including comparing a relational factor that is a function of the two beams of light and is a function of a time differential, or intensity, between the third and fourth beams of light with a reference and detecting therefrom a surface defect in the die; and

using the first and second beam splitters to generate different third and fourth beams from a nondefective semiconductor and analyzing the different third and fourth beams of light to develop the reference.

4. (original) A method, according to claim 3, further including thinning the back side of the die before the steps of claim ~~1~~ 3

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5. (original) A method, according to claim 4, wherein thinning the back side of the die includes locally thinning a portion of the back side of the die.